

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 328

By Coley

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant Vernon McGarity for meritorious service.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans continue this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Vernon McGarity has served with courage and gallantry and deserves proper recognition for heroism both in the U.S. Army and in society today; and

WHEREAS, Vernon McGarity served with great bravery and ability in the Battle of the Bulge during World War II while serving as a Technical Sergeant of the U.S. Army, Company L, 393<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, 99<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division; and

WHEREAS, on the fateful morning of December 16, 1944, Sergeant McGarity was painfully wounded in an artillery barrage that preceded the powerful counteroffensive launched by the Germans near Krinkelt, Belgium; and

WHEREAS, despite his injury, Sgt. McGarity valiantly refused to be evacuated; he and his brave men stood firm despite the enemy fire;

WHEREAS, Sgt. McGarity also rescued one of his wounded friends and greatly encouraged his comrades; and

WHEREAS, the next day, under heavy fire, Sgt. McGarity gallantly rescued another wounded soldier and bravely ran to an advantageous position, where he immobilized the enemy's lead tank with a round from a rocket launcher; and

WHEREAS, when the ammunition began to run low, Sgt. McGarity again heroically braved a concentration of hostile fire to replenish his unit's supply; though his escape route was blocked by the enemy, he killed or wounded all of the hostile gunners single-handedly; and

WHEREAS, because of his unhesitating courage, his squad was able to delay imprisonment until all of their ammunition had been used; Sgt. McGarity and his men spent six months in a German prison camp before being freed at the close of the war; and

WHEREAS, for his actions, Sgt. McGarity was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman at the White House in December of 1945; at one such ceremony, Truman told the recipients, "I would rather have the blue band of the Medal of Honor around my neck than to be President"; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, a local honor was bestowed upon Sgt. McGarity and another Hardin County Medal of Honor recipient; on December 4 of that year, state and local dignitaries gathered to officially dedicate the Harrison-McGarity Bridge; and

WHEREAS, Vernon McGarity is grateful for the love and companionship he shared with his wife, Ethelene, who passed away in 1998; his noble accomplishments are a source of pride for his son, Ray McGarity, and honor the memory of his beloved daughter, Sharron McGarity; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Vernon McGarity performed his duties with the utmost skill, dedication, and professionalism; his service can only be categorized as outstanding; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor Sergeant Vernon McGarity for his exemplary life and meritorious service to our country, commend him upon receiving the United States Congressional Award Gold Medal, and extend to him our best wishes for every continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.